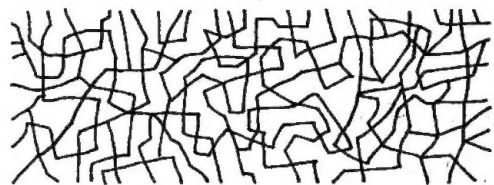


COLLECTOR 18



BLACK⁶⁹



ALAN
HANLEY
-10-69

SKYMAN AND AIRBOY

ARE A COUPLE OF
GOLDEN AGE HEROES
THAT COULD HAVE
PLAYED THE SCENE
TOGETHER MUCH

THE SAME AS BATMAN 'N' ROBIN - BUT THEY DIDN'T, EACH WORKED FOR A DIFFERENT PUBLISHER. **SKYMAN** APPEARED IN **BIG SHOT** 'N' HIS OWN ZINE FOR AWHILE PUBLISHED BY THE COLUMBIA COMIC CORPORATION, MOST OF THE TIME IT WAS DRAWN BY OGDEN WHITNEY. **AIRBOY** WAS TRULY A BOY FIGHTING THE JAPS IN WORLD WAR II IN **AIR FIGHTERS**, LATER CHANGED SIMPLY TO **AIRBOY**. IT WAS PUBLISHED BY HILLMAN PERIODICALS IN CHICAGO. FOLLOWING THE WAR **AIRBOY**, AS A CHARACTER 'N' AS A HIGHLY STYLIZED COMIC MAGAZINE, REALLY GREW UP. IT WAS ALSO IN **AIRBOY** WHERE THE NOW LEGENDARY CHARACTER, THE **HEAP**, WAS INTRODUCED. THE AFFINITY OF THE TWO CHARACTERS ABOVE EXTEND BEYOND THE PROXIMITY OF SKY WITH AIR. BOTH OPERATED THEIR SPECIAL AIRPLANES, **SKYMAN** HAD HIS "WING", **AIRBOY** HIS "BIRDIE". BOTH CHARACTERS ARE OFF-SHOOTS OF THE CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT SCHOOL OF "GOGGLE GUYS"!

THE COLLECTOR

18

An amateur magazine devoted to the characters and persons involved with all areas of fandom.

BILL G. WILSON, editor & publisher

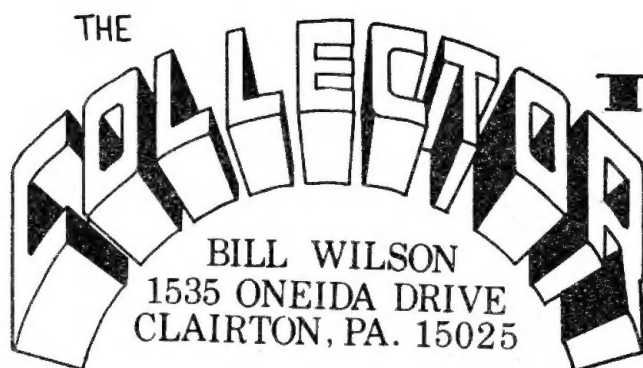
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CONTRIBUTORS

William Black	Ed Romero
Alan Hanley	Tom Christopher
Collin Lau	Mike McKenney
Alan Light	Jim Shull
Dave Transue	Don Rosa
Jim Jones	Duffy Vohland
John G. Fantucchio	Dave Hanley

FEB. 1970





The Collector IS

EDITORIAL

Bill G. Wilson

Welcome to the pages of the first issue of "The Collector" of the '70s. The '70s hold a great many surprises in store for us, and you can be sure that this magazine will be striving long and hard to bring you some of those surprises! Why, even now, with this issue, we have expanded our format to 20 pages in an endeavor to present more material on more varied subjects. "The Collector" (we hope) will become THE magazine for all collectors in our field. This will include: BLBs, old radio shows, pulp magazines, serials, comic strips, comic books and all other fields RELATED to fandom. To begin this new policy, this issue we have introduced: some info about The Spider, by Jim Jones (pulp) A text by David Hanley (sword-and-sorcery) a special Flash Gordon still (serials) This does not mean we will not concentrate mainly on comics (we WILL), but it means that these various fields will be discussed, presented, or mentioned occasionally to tie these fields in with comics. Any suggestions along these lines would be appreciated (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope)

Before I say anything more, I'd like to apologize to Martin L. Greim. It seems Martin was not pleased with his Fantucchio character illustration last issue (#17). The illustration was reproduced from a ditto copy, which isn't the best thing in the world. In an attempt to fix the negative (which, if it hadn't been tampered with, would have reproduced terribly) some detail was lost, and Martin feels his work was not well represented. So...I publicly apologize for your disappointment, Martin. But, thanks for letting me reproduce the illustration anyway; it seems the majority of readers liked it anyway!

Now on to business. With this issue, I would like to welcome: William Black (Creepy/Eerie artist), Alan Light (ed. All Dynamic), Ed Romero, Mike McKenney, and Dave Hanley. I'd also like to welcome Tom Christopher back to our pages. Here's hoping all of these guys will stick with us through thick and thin, for better or worse, as long as they live. (I think I just married them to the Collector!)

Please make a special note to look over our new policy (preceding page). It is effective as of RIGHT NOW! (Special policy sheets with full information about EVERYTHING are now being printed)

Don't be too shocked to find a beautiful illustration of Quicksilver on page 9; it's by none other than: JOHN G. FANTUCCHIO! Making a great example of his talent with this Quicksilver piece!!!

Incidentally, you might be interested in the fact that our man John Fantucchio is now working for Warren. He has already completed a story for Vampirella (probably in #5), and is working on one for Creepy. When his first work appears, write to Warren, let them know how you liked it, and (if you liked it-which I'm sure you will) ask for more of John's work. We fans have kept John to ourselves too long! It's time the world knows of his fantastic comic art! (Don't worry, TC fans; John informs me that he will be loyal to The Collector, contributing on an even basis)

STILL on the subject of that "Fantastic Fantucchio": Look forward to a great cover (probably of Hyperman) by John NEXT ISSUE. You fans have been asking for another Fantucchio masterwork cover, so take advantage of it! Buy a couple copies, huh? Also next issue, look for:

Part II of "Sinar Alone" by Dave Hanley
"Hyperman" by yours truly & ?

"Sun Day At Kanaan" by Anthony Kowalik
Another great serial flashback

Art by: JOE SINNOTT, for one(!) (if you think this guy is "just an inker", boy are you wrong!)
Maybe we can twist the arms of Bill Black, Jim Jones, Al Hanley, Jim Shull, Don Rosa, and all those other great artists to come up with something!

ALSO NEXT ISSUE: The return of Don Newton!!!!
We're going to see if we can get this blushing bridegroom to come up with one of his famous centerspreads for next ish! (Keep your fingers crossed!)

Bill G. Wilson

In ordering The Collector, please remember:

"Patience Is A Virtue". (we're not going to cheat)

"THE COLLECTOR" RECOMMENDS:

SPA-FON...Rich Hauser/4519 N. Richmond Street/
Chicago, Illinois 60625

TALON... By JIM STERANKO...Rich Hauser
(address above)

THE COLLECTOR'S GUIDE...Jerry Bails/P.O. Box
7499/Northend Station/Detroit, Mich.48202

THE ROCKET'S BLAST-COMICCOLLECTOR...G.B. Love
9875 SW 212 St./Miami, Florida 33157
(note: #68 will be 1 month late)

PARAGON ILLUSTRATED... (see ad on page 19)

THE COLLECTOR SPECIAL... (see ad on page 15)

FANDOM ANNUAL #2... G.B. Love (address above)

*FA #2 will feature the Fantucchio interview
from The Collector #13 (layout by TC ed.)



NOBI



por
LUDWIG RENN
ADAPTACIÓN Y DIBUJOS: RUFF.

EL GORILA PADRE, DANDO FEROCES RUGIDOS, HACE HUÍR A TODOS LLENOS DE PÁNICO, PERO NOBI...



LA COMPAÑÍA DE NOBI ES MUCHO MÁS ATRAYENTE PARA MAFUKA QUE LA DE SU PADRE Y ESA NOCHE, DUERME JUNTO A EL EN SU CHOZA...



CUBA

A LA MAÑANA SIGUIENTE, SE REÚNEN LOS TRES Y SE ADENTRAN EN EL BOSQUE EN BUSCA DE UN BUEN DEGAYUNO...



NOBI ES UN BUEN ESCALADOR DE ÁRBOLES, PERO SU AGILIDAD NO PUEDE COMPARARSE CON LA DE LOS GORILAS...



**FOREIGN
COMICS**

RELATOS

TAWA

EL HOMBRE GACELA

COMICS DE MEXICO

Relatos Fabulosos

MEMEN

PINGUIN

ALAN LIGHT

It is always interesting to note differences in countries, and since we are all involved in the comics field somehow it is particularly interesting to note differences in comic books from foreign lands. This time it is Mexico and South America, where Spanish is the language. I have several translations of American comics to Spanish, and I'd like to share what I've learned with you.

First off, there is no Superboy in any Mexican comic magazine. Whether it be Superboy or Superman, he is always called Supermán (note accent over the "a"). Pronunciation is "Super-mahn" due to the accent mark. Superboy, as everyone knows, lives in Smallville and Superman in Metropolis, but in the translations, it makes no difference whatsoever what age he is, for Superboy and Superman both live in VILLACHICA. Even though in one story the town is "an All-American hometown" and in the next it is a "teeming metropolis", this is left unexplained. Both live in VILLACHICA all of their lives. The JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA has its name changed too. Evidently the company that prints translations (known by the name NOVERO) does not want their readers to KNOW that they are printing translations, so to wipe away any doubt, the AMERICA is dropped and they become "THE CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE". No AMERICA whatsoever.

Aquaman and Aqualad star in "FABULOUS ADVENTURES" (as I translate it from RELATOS FABULOSOS). Krypto, famous superdog of the super-family, is called "Super-cán" (no, not like tin can, but "cain" for canine). The Space Canine Patrol is called the SPECIAL Canine Patrol, and Wonder Woman, JLA member (or former member; whatever, down there the mags published are 2 years old) is called MARVELLA, which I doubt DC is too crazy about, considering their competition. Also, Supergirl is known as "Super-Nina".

One interesting thing about the translations also is that it matters not which stories go into what magazine. The title of the magazine might be BATMAN, yet it contains a JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA story or SUPERBOY in it. Or it might be SUPERMAN, yet look inside and you only find a LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. Obviously the title of the book is an unimportant technicality. Each magazine is put out.....get this.....4 times a month! Weekly. A good deal, no? Marvel: take note. But I suppose, the stories being reprints, that NOVERO has prime pick of all DC's mags, and they have more than enough to handle.....and then there's always the back-issues.....

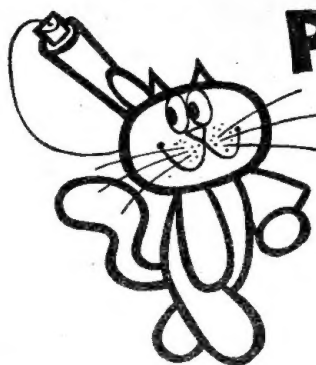
So much for NATIONAL. Archie, our friendly neighborhood teeny-bopper, has the "E" chopped off of his name, making him "Archi" in the translations; Veronica Lodge's father is SR. DEL VALLE, while Big Moose is "Gorilion (gorilla??) Fuentes". Elongated Man is known as the Elastic Man, or EL HOMBRE ELASTICO. Donald Duck and relatives are featured in VARIEDADES DE WALT DISNEY. Woody Woodpecker, Walter Lantz's creation, appears as EL PAJERO LOCO. Little Lulu (Oh, I know you're interested in her!?!?) is EL PAQUINA LULU, and I'll bet you can't guess who DANIEL MONTES and RUFO are.....why, noneother than the famed Dennis the Menace and Ruff, by Hank Ketcham.

SPLASH PAGE OF
A CUBAN
COMIC

HISTORIETAS
A CUBA



● Los niños son la esperanza del mundo ● Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias son baluarte de la Patria ● Por eso van de la mano... por eso marchan juntos.

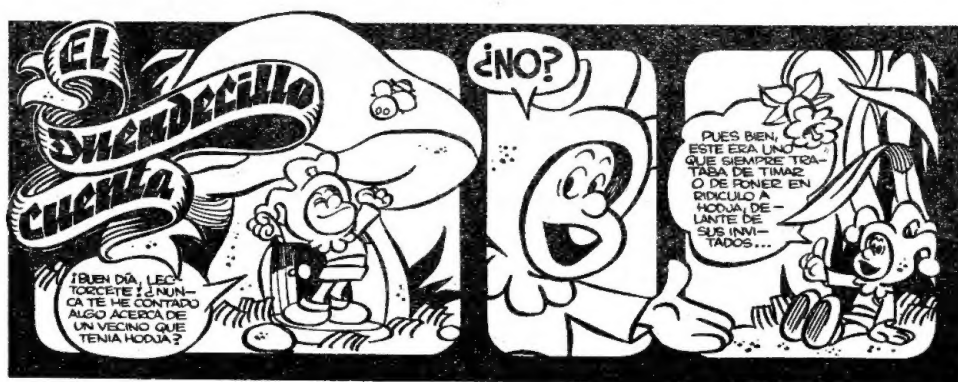


PLAN RATAPLAN
PLON PLAN
BONG
PLON
BONG
BANG

ROSITA

21

BORDIGHERA (ITALY) 26 LUG



COVER OF AN ITALIAN
COMIC

Now for some typical Mexican sound effects. These are always, if nothing else, amusing to look at. For instance, the machine gun in Mexico goes "Takatakatakataka" while compared to our "Ratatatat" or similar sound. When someone is hit on the head, the sound is not THUD (or OUCH!) but THUD (teeood), while an explosion is PIIOMPH (peeom-ff) not BOOM. VIIOOSH is WHOOSH, and POM is POW when guns are fired (single-shot). Maybe everyone hears differently??

Usually the comic magazines of foreign lands are strictly black & white interior, with a color cover to attract buyers. However, in the Mexican translations, all are in full, glorious (sick) color. The coloring leaves much to be desired. It makes you appreciate the American "know-how-to-color" jobs even more. Why? Well, colors run together; blobs of red, blue, yellow and black appear all over, often sticking pages together like cement; most don't stay within the lines and the colors used are sickly colors. If those of you that think Marvel's old color jobs were horrid, you ought to see one of these. Strictly an amateur job, or the printer had too much tequilla.

The translations usually have "fillers" in place of our letter columns, ads, etc. and they are usually (unfortunately) geared for small children. Each one costs \$1.00, which means one peso, not a dollar. All in all a fair to poor job, and the translation balloons leave out much of the original wording, undermining what story was left if you could see the pictures. As I said, they are fun to look at and compare with the American comics, and if you ever get a chance to buy some I suggest that you do.

I'm sorry I left out MARVEL, and the reason for that was because I have no Marvel translations. I'm now trying to get some...

end

bits and pieces: MAIL ...

"I really enjoyed the way you conducted the Newton interview - it shows a great deal of maturity."

--John G. Fantucchio
Artist

"The magazines arrived today & I'm delighted with the results. Nice timing too...2 days before my birthday!"

--Don Newton
Artist



Doug Fratz
RR#1
Accident, Md.
21520

...Naturally, the Newton interview was very nice. Don not only looks, but sounds like a great overall artist. / G.B. Love's LOC was interesting, as I've never heard anyone really worried about comics or fandom "dying"

most especially fandom. And the thought certainly never entered my mind. I cannot think of any occurrence that would completely kill fandom. / As for Steve Ditko, of course, Enemy Ace's thinking is completely irrational. That is not the point, however. What makes Enemy Ace so good is that Von Hammer is irrational in a very interesting and believable manner. He is an interesting, if warped thinking, individual. / I'll have to skip commenting on Jim Jones' fine article and art on The Shadow, unfortunately, as I'm not really familiar with the subject.../As for Mike McGrath's article...right, Mike. I'm glad someone is realizing that censorship is neither right nor desirable in any circumstance. What the pro-censorship person is saying is that people other than themselves are too stupid to be allowed certain material. Censorship for children is especially argued, because children are supposedly too stupid to pick what to read and then digest rationally that material. That is a very poor argument also. What a person reads about (in a fantasy world) is so little a part of anyone's environment that its effect is nominal. His environment in the real world is what is the deciding factor. Am I, do you ask, saying that the great Fredric Wertham is wrong? Yes, I am. I was not the least bit surprised, by the way, to find that Bill Gaines, in reality, faints at the sight of blood. Think about it...

"Thanx for "The Collector" #17. I enjoyed it very much, especially the Newton feature." --Rich Hauser, editor

SPA FON



THE MASTER OF MEN! SPIDER

MAY, 1941

On most of the covers of his old pulp novels, THE SPIDER had a handsome, normal face. He wore a small, black satin finish, Halloween-type mask that surrounded his eyes and only partially covered his face.

However, in the interior illustrations of these pulp novels, THE SPIDER's face resembled the above sketch. I prefer and mostly remember THIS more frightening version of THE SPIDER's face.

BERKLEY PUBLISHING CORPORATION reprinted the first two of the old SPIDER pulps in pocketbook form in 1969. They say by March of 1970, #3 and #4 will be issued. #4 is said to have a cover by JIM STERANKO.

The first two pocketbook covers depict THE SPIDER as a sort of ZORRO dressed in black and crimson.



QUICKSILVER

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FLASH GORDON

BUSTER • CRABBE

DALE ARDEN

JEAN • ROGERS







art SHOW CASE

JAMES
SHULL



12 no. 1



DON ROSA



DUFFY'S TAVERN NO.1

BY DUFFY VOHLAND

I've got so many things to talk about, I don't know where to start. This is being written the week of Christmas, and a couple of days ago I called Bill and we had a nice conversation about comics and such. One thing that was mentioned was me giving an auto-biography this time around to let people know who to blame this column on. Here 'tis:

I was born on June 20, 1952, which makes me a senior in high school. I live in an extremely small town that is not in constant contact with the world of the living, so I rely on my mail to furnish me with a road to the outside world. My first hobby was collecting dinosaurs. (Not real ones; just small replicas.) After a couple years, I lost interest in them, so I turned to rocks, which I collected for a good while. Around 1963, I became interested in comic books, and have been collecting them ever since. I guess it was only natural that I got into comic books, old radio shows, sci-fi, etc. since my nickname, Duffy, was taken from "Duffy's Tavern" on the radio. Remarkable that it's also the name of this column, isn't it? While reading an early Castle of Frankenstein, I noticed a few plugs for something called fanzines. The first zine I bought was Star-Studded Comics. From there, I found out about a small portion of fandom, and a zine that really got me started, The Rockets Blast/Comickollector. I started buying the RB&CC and several zines that were advertised in it; gradually becoming stationary in fandom. As you know if you read the

last NEW(TC#16), The Collector was the first zine I was fortunate enough to contribute to (Thanks Bill). If you've seen all of my articles in TC, I hope you think I've improved some. I'm taking a course in art from the Commercial Art School in Minneapolis, and I hope to go into cartooning and comic books. That's me!

Now to do a little correcting of some of the news I reported last ish. (My informant was a little(ha) offbase) Most of the Marvel news was just talk; that is, they were just thinking about doing these things, not really planning to do all of them. So, no 3rd Marvel horror book in the near future, no Black Knight mag (hopefully, BK will be featured in the Avengers fairly regularly), and no Frank Springer spy book. Jim Steranko didn't sell Talon to Warren, but hopefully we'll see him someplace, sometime, somehow. ((It seems Duffy is unaware of Rich Hauser's planned Talon book. For details, consult the editorial in this issue.)) Since Gold Key has discontinued its adventure line, the super-hero special will probably not materialize. Somebody at DC IS working on a western but I don't know if it's Matt Asch, Western Lawyer; nor do I know who the artist and writer will be. The Spectre teamups have been shelved for the time being. Superman and Batman will stay in the Justice League to help keep the sales at a decent level, I don't know if Aquaman will leave, though. Mort Weisinger is working on a new mag, but it's not sword and sorcery. Joe Kubert isn't working on a GI Joe book, unless it's to go with the doll. Since Joe Giella is doing OK as inker on the JLA, Wally Wood may not try his hand at it. So far, Nightmaster is NOT getting his own mag. As you know by now, the new mag Mike Sekowsky is working on is not Tim Master but Jason's Quest. I Ching will probably be kept around. Sorry about all the incorrect news; I'll try not to let it happen again by checking out my sources better next time.

After that put down, I hope you don't mind if I give myself a (very) little pat on the back for the bit of prediction I did. Look at the third paragraph from the end of my last NEW column in TC#16. I suggested that DC cut their title characters story down to 17 pages and add a second story featuring a defunct hero like The Creeper, The Hawk & The Dove, etc. Welllll, guess what the new policy is! That's right! They're cutting the main story down and adding a second one. So far they have put Deadman in the back of Aquaman for three issues, and then in the back of The Challengers of The Unknown, The Viking Prince in the back of Star Spangled War Stories, and then a new series in SWS (I wish they'd keep VP instead of replacing him with a new strip) and according to The Comic Reader this policy will also effect Batman, Flash, Superboy, Green Lantern, and quite a few others.



DUFFY ... MORE !!

If anybody had asked me how things looked in fandom and comicdom around the middle of 1969, I would have said terrible; mags were dropping right and left. Thank heavens, things have begun to change; for example:

Marvel is finally coming out with an addition to their adventure line. It is, as you probably know by now, none other than Robert E. Howard's Conan. (As far as I know, Roy Thomas will write it and Barry Smith will be the penciller.) I really hope it catches on, 'cause if it does it could mean the beginning of a group of sword & sorcery mags, possibly meaning the introduction of The Black Night and Nightmaster in their own books (I hope). Now only are they pubbing Conan, but they're also putting Captain Marvel back in the line-up. The last three issues (#17-#19), which featured the new CM, sold extremely well; well enough to put the book back into production. I wish they'd do the same thing with Doctor Strange and The X-Men.

Everyone thought that by the end of 1969, most of the superhero mags would be defunct; thankfully they were wrong. I think the reason they aren't "going down" as fast as people thought they would is because they are high enough in quality and strong enough to keep going; also, kids today are getting older sooner and want a more mature comic book to read. Another thing that I'm sure plays an important part is the fact that the people who work on the mags care a lot more than they did in The Golden Age. I'm not saying the pros didn't care then, but a lot of them just wrote or drew the book(s) to make money. Today, the pros are not only in it for the money; they are trying to put out something that a person wouldn't be ashamed to admit he reads. Some good examples of the guys that care are Dick Giordano, Roy Thomas, Neal Adams, and Denny O'Neil. I'm not trying to say that these are the only pros who care; they're just four of the many I could name.

Here's one reason I wrote the above paragraph. Instead of trying to tell you about the book, I'll quote Mark Hanerfeld from The Comic Reader #76: "Green Lantern is being revamped...and more. The book is being written by Denny O'Neil and illustrated by Neal Adams under the editorship of Julie Schwartz. Green Arrow has as important a part in the tale as has GL, and they share equal billing on the cover. But, that's just the skeleton of the change. There's more. To label the new GL I would have to call it the Comic Book of Social Significance. The book is about 2 walking, talking, living, breathing anachronisms who suddenly find themselves among the realities of shums and prejudice and moral and ethical fabrications; about 2 men who discover they've been leading storybook lives and set out to find America, the REAL America." That just about says what I would have said...only better. Not only do we get to see a more human, less powerful Green Lantern, but we FINALLY (and is it ever about time) get to see Green Arrow in a regular co-strip of his own. The new Lantern/Arrow mag is really going to be something. Buy a couple copies; it will undoubtedly be a collector's item in a few years.

To repeat the format of one of my paragraphs in TC#16---now that you've seen them, what do you think of Jason's Quest? The Losers? Hot Wheels? Gil Kane on the Flash? The Vigilante? The Al Williamson story in House of Mystery #185? Yellowjacket and The Wasp being temporarily replaced by Quicksilver and The Scarlet Witch? The Steranko and Bode'/Jones covers on the Warren books? The Web Of Horror?

I received a letter a while back from Dirk Burhans which contained a "gripe" that he wanted to mention, and I'll do so by repeating what he had written to me: "As a relatively new member of fandom, I find it very hard to buy some of the fanzines that I've heard a lot about. Sure, you can read stuff about The Comic Reader, Witzend, etc., but how the heck are you supposed to buy these fanzines? The editors of such zines don't advertise that much because they've already got enough subscribers, but how are we new fans going to buy the zines if they don't?" Anybody else out there have the same problem as Dirk? What he says is quite true, and it's too bad, 'cause everyone should have a chance to buy these books if he wants.

Still on Dirk's letter, if any of you have a gripe you'd like to have heard, send it to me and I'll incorporate it into a future DUFFY'S TAVERN. While you're at it, send me your comments on the things I mention in this column; remember the name of this col---a tavern is a place to come in and say what you think. Get busy and write.

Now to add to what I said last time on the campaign to revise the Comics Code Authority. The thing is slowly picking up momentum, but we need EVERYBODY'S support. If everyone of you would just buy one post card, put your name and address on it, say you support the campaign, and mail it to me, we'll be started on the road to success. If you publish a zine, it would help if you said your mag backed the campaign. If any zine editor would like more info for publication, just send a card or letter saying so and I'll see what I can do. If you're a pro and would like to help, send a card to me saying you back the campaign, and spread the word through prodcom. (Are you with us, Roy Thomas?)

If you are undecided, I'll ask all of you a few questions to help your opinions. What's wrong with depicting the Hulk's head the way Jim Steranko did? What's wrong with showing the phone off the hook? What's wrong with doing a story on drugs? Everything is changing with the new morality EXCEPT comic books.

A club that was formed by Gary Groth (7263 Evanston Rd., Springfield, Virginia 22150), The International Organization Of Comic Collectors, is not only trying to unite fandom, but is also THE headquarters for the campaign. It costs \$2.00 per year to join and members get a photo-offset newsletter and several other benefits.

If the campaign is to be a success, we MUST have your support. We want comic books on an adult level!!!!

I never know how to end these things, so I'll just stop.

WRITE

Duffy Vohland
P.O. Box 70
Clarksburg, Indiana
47225

"THE COLLECTOR" IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO REVISE THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY.



SPECIAL - SPECIAL - SPECIAL - SPECIAL

For a limited time only, ALL those who order The Collector Special #1 (50¢) will receive, ABSOLUTELY FREE:

- 1 High quality, offset reproduction of the Phantom Movie Poster from 1943 (starring Tom Tyler)
+ (plus)
- 1 High quality, offset reproduction of the cover of The Collector #13 (the beautiful Fantucchio wrap-around masterpiece from the issue that sold like wildfire!)

BOTH ABSOLUTELY FREE(!) WITH EACH ORDER FOR THE COLLECTOR SPECIAL

(actual value: \$1.00) Send 50¢ today to:
THE COLLECTOR SPECIAL; DEPT. C-18
1535 Oneida Drive
Clairton, Pa. 15025
(75¢ in Canada/\$1.00 overseas) (all mailed flat)

SPECIAL - SPECIAL - SPECIAL - SPECIAL



"SINAR ALONE"

by DAVID HANLEY

At this time two great civilized empires existed; civilized meaning a few steps up the scale from barbarism. These two empires were the Janzoor empire and the Armen empire with Janzoor being the greater of the two. Janzoor lay to the far west of the continent and Armen lay to the far east, separated from the coast by a long, narrow strip of wasteland which extended the length of the continent. Between both of these empires were the semi-desert lands of the Harubean tribes. At the far north of the continent was the cold, mountainous home of the barbarians. The barbarian tribes were continually warring with each other.

It was a lucky circumstance that these tribes were unorganized, for as one fighting force they could easily have conquered the remainder of the continent. There was an unconquered area of land lying just below the barbarian highlands and the civilized lands of the south. This area remained unconquered for no army, either from Janzoor or Armen could retain control. Due to the hill tribes and the Harubeans did they rarely, if ever, bother to enter the cold northern lands.

The continent was surrounded by three great bodies of water. At the south lay the Juntoor Sea, and to the west lay the Constom Sea; to the east was the Bonter Sea. To the far south lay another land mass known as the Dark Lands, which were shrouded in legends of evil sorcerors and human sacrifices. These lands were also, supposedly, the dwelling place of Zarm, the first one. Where chaos existed, Zarm thrived. He was ever trying to spread his evil over the lands of all men. The only ones who opposed Zarm were the Vazar, the lighted ones. Zarm's power is fast spreading, however, and it is here that our story begins.....

In the wind-swept city of Craser, a less than friendly dice game had come to an end. One of the two men who had been playing dice stood up while the owner of the tavern in which they were playing addressed him, saying "Come back anytime my friend, when you have more gold to lose."

"First, swine, I do not call you friend, and this is the last place I'd return to."

As he started to leave, one of the five onlookers, a barbarian named Sinar, lashed out at the tavern owner...

"Return that gold! I have been paying close attention to this game, and you have cheated this man."

The man who was about to leave immediately turned, drawing his double-bladed sword. But the barbarian Sinar stood with his arms at his sides. The fat tavern owner, with some contempt, said, "I'm sure you are mistaken my friend."

"If I am," Sinar said in a booming voice, also filled with contempt, "why have you hidden those dice?"

"You are much too smart to remain alive"

As if the words of the tavern owner were a signal, the other four spectators, who were barbarians also, drew their scimitars while the fat tavern owner hurriedly went to a back room.

Sinar could tell these men were not amateurs, and that they were practiced in the use of their scimitars. Sinar drew his heavy broadsword from its leather scabbard and two of the Harubeans were on the attack. Meanwhile, the other two went after Sinar's new-found comrade.

Sinar parried a blow to his head and came back with a blow of his own, which sent one of his attackers down in a bloody heap, his head almost severed. This gave Sinar the chance to devote full attention to his remaining assailant. He noticed that his friend was doing quite as well and had let himself be backed against a dimly lit wall. But Sinar could do nothing to help, for he still had to deal with his remaining opponent. The Harubean started making hurried thrusts, which proved that he was tiring, so Sinar had only to wait for the fatal mistake that was bound to come after a minute of holding an imperstable wall of whirling steel between himself and his foe. An opening came ... The Harubean struck a vicious blow, again at Sinar's head, and instead of proving the thrust, Sinar dodged to the side and drove the point of his broadsword up and through his opponent's heart, which came penetrating through his back. Wasting no time, he quickly withdrew his blade and went to his friend's help, knocking over tables and chairs. His comrade-in-arms was almost unable to hold his own sword, due to numerous cuts and gashes on his arms, legs, and chest.....

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